

IS GASOLINE CONTAMINATING YOUR DRINKING WATER?

Gasoline is one of the most dangerous products commonly found around the home, yet people often store and use it with little care. Some of the chemicals in gasoline have been found in drinking water with increasing frequency, including benzene, toluene, & MtBE (methyl t-butyl ether), which is *easily dissolved in water* and is a possible carcinogen. Even gasoline spills as small as a gallon can contaminate your drinking water wells or a public water supply.



To Protect Your Drinking Water From Gasoline:

1. Avoid Spilling Gasoline on the Ground, Especially Near Wells

- Don't drain gasoline from lawn mowers, snowblowers, etc. onto the ground
- Don't burn brush with gasoline
- Don't top off your fuel tank
- Keep refueling and engine work away from water supply wells, if possible over a concrete flow or similar barrier, and immediately clean up any gas or oil spills.

2. Avoid Spilling Gasoline in Lakes, Ponds, and Rivers

- Keep special gasoline-absorbing pads on your gas-powered boat; know how to use them.

■ If you own a larger boat, make sure it has no-spill tank vents.

■ Fill portable tanks from outboard boat engines on shore.

■ Refuel snowmobiles and ice augers on shore; do not take gasoline storage tanks onto ice-covered ponds.

3. Store Gasoline Properly

■ Use a clearly labeled container made for gasoline, with a spout to avoid spills.

■ Keep gasoline containers in a dry, well ventilated shed or detached garage away from water supply wells. Don't keep metal gasoline cans on a dirt floor for extended periods.

4. Dispose of Waste Gasoline Properly

■ Handle old or dirty gasoline as hazardous waste. Bring it to a household hazardous waste collection center in a proper gasoline container

IF A SPILL OCCURS

For *any size* spill that is not immediately cleaned up, call the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) emergency petroleum spill number (271-3644) *immediately* for instructions. The DES line is answered weekdays from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.; at other times talk to DES's on-call spill response specialist by dialing the NH State Police at **1-800-346-4009**. For more gasoline safety tips or information about testing your well water, call DES at 271-2975.

Clean Drinking Water Is Up To You!



Drinking Water Source Protection Program

Phase II & V Chemical Monitoring Waiver Program



Where does your drinking water come from?

Your drinking water comes from either groundwater or surface water. Groundwater is the water that flows through the spaces between soil particles and through fractures in rock. It comes from rain and snowmelt percolating through the ground. Surface water comes from rainfall and snowmelt running over land and from *groundwater* seepage into lakes and rivers.

Why should you be concerned?

While some pollutants (such as bacteria, viruses, and phosphorus) can be reduced by passing through soil under certain conditions, groundwater can be easily contaminated by chemicals and oils. Surface water is also affected by soil and pollutants picked up as water flows over land.

Household Hazardous Chemicals

Automotive Fluids, Auto Batteries,
Used Motor Oil, Paint, Paint Thinner,
Other Solvents, Pesticides, and
Cleaning Products

What can you do to protect your drinking water?

Follow the Do's and Don'ts on the next 2 pages.

DO's



Do use non-toxic and less-toxic alternatives to household chemicals such as cleaners, oil based paints, and insecticides.

Do take leftover household chemicals to your town's household hazardous waste collection day.

Do follow package directions on pesticides, fertilizers, and other household chemicals.

Do check your underground fuel storage tank (UST) frequently for leaks. Have an UST removed if it is more than 20 yrs. old; replace it with an aboveground storage tank that has a concrete slab underneath it and cover it.

Do take care of your septic system. Inspect the septic tank every year and have it pumped out every 3-5 years.

Do avoid damage to your leachfield and distribution lines by keeping vehicles, livestock, and other heavy objects off of it.



DON'Ts



Don't buy more hazardous chemicals than you need.

Don't dispose of hazardous chemicals by pouring them down the drain or onto the ground.

Don't over use household chemicals. More is not better.

Don't have your UST removed by a contractor who is not familiar with new State guidelines for UST removal.

Don't overload your septic system with solids by using a garbage disposal (unless the system is specifically designed for one).

Don't pour chemicals down the sink or toilet.

Don't use septic system cleaners or additives containing acids or chemical solvents such as trichloroethylene (TCE).

REDUCE-REUSE-RECYCLE

For more information about what you can do, call the Drinking Water Source Protection Program at 271-1168 or see our website at www.des.state.nh.us/dwspp